

Work Session

Agenda Item #	9
Meeting Date	October 17, 2005
Prepared By	Barbara B. Matthews
Approved By	

Discussion Item	City Manager's Quarterly Update
Background	The City Manager has historically provided the City Council with a quarterly report on City activities.
Policy	The City Manager provides the City Council with periodic updates on City activities.
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	City Manager's Quarterly Update for the Period of July 1 – September 30, 2005
Recommendation	For Discussion Only
Special Consideration	

**CITY MANAGER'S
QUARTERLY UPDATE
JULY 1, 2005 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2005**

Administration

- Considerable staff resources were devoted to the Community Center project during the quarter. In addition to the day-to-day monitoring of the project, a great deal of time was spent on logistical details related to the staff relocation process and matters related to the Community Plaza Level phase of the project.
- The primary focus of the City Clerk's Office entailed planning and preparation for the upcoming municipal election, which will be held on November 8th. Tasks included a review of election law and files from previous elections, meeting with a working group on elections to plan for the use of paper ballots in the election, revision of the manual for election judges, and recruitment of election judges.
- On July 8th, City Manager Barbara Matthews, Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow, Chief Creamer, and representatives of the Police Department met with Montgomery County officials to discuss the possible transfer of police communications and criminal investigations to the County.
- Deputy City Manager Wayne Hobbs, in conjunction with Chief Creamer, participated in the start up of the Emergency Management Committee. Two meetings were held during the quarter. The Committee meets on the last Thursday of every month, except for those dates that fall on holidays.
- The Police Retirement Committee held its quarterly meeting on September 16th.
- Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow worked to gain support for the City's legislative agenda by the Maryland Municipal League and to have legislation on condominium conversion regulation drafted for the upcoming State legislative session.
- Departmental staff prepared forms and gathered materials related to the State bond bill and Program Open Space funds for the Community Center, resulting in formal granting of the funds by the Board of Public Works.
- The annual audit of the City's general purpose financial statements got underway. Clifton Gunderson, LLP conducted fieldwork during the month of September.
- Departmental staff, in conjunction with representatives of the departments of Public Works and Housing and Community Development, spent considerable time on the establishment of a pedestrian walkway through the rear parking lot of the Municipal Building. The on-going Community Center construction, coupled with the need to maintain a safe travel lane, posed certain challenges in establishing the walkway.

Communications

- The Communications staff continued its efforts to videotape City and community events. Events covered during the quarter included the Independence Day Parade, the YES League Summer Basketball Championships, the Takoma Park Folk Festival, the Town Hall Meeting on gangs, and the public forum on the proposed Metro site development. Community Oriented Policing seg-

ments included "Senior Safety," "On The Beat" and "Officer of the Year." Other Snapshot segments included highlights of the Takoma Park Jazz Fest, the City's Tree Ordinance, and the return of the Farmer's Market to Laurel Avenue.

- City TV received an award in the 2005 Hometown Video Festival sponsored by the Alliance for Community Media. The award, which was presented in the category of Educational Class Project, was given for "Humane Society PSA" Takoma Park resident and then 6th grader Julian Barnes wrote, produced, and edited this Public Service Announcement with City TV staff serving as mentors for the community service component of a multi-disciplinary project on television. Communications Director Lonni Moffet and Video Production Manager Alvaro Calabia accepted the award on behalf of Mr. Barnes on July 8th.
- As part of the department's efforts to acquire new programming, the Communications staff has acquired "Road to Recovery," a program on substance abuse produced by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Housing and Community Development

- The first phase of the City's Wayfinding Project is nearly complete. An application for a Historic Area Work Permit for Gateway signs located around Takoma Park's historic district borders was recently submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission. The Wayfinding Committee reviewed the final design revisions requested by the City Council and have scheduled a meeting with SHA to negotiate use of the signs on State highways.
- Departmental staff provided support to the tenants of Hampshire Towers in organizing and forming a Tenant Association. The Association is investigating its options under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance.
- In partnership with Montgomery County and other governmental and non-profit organizations, staff planned and organized the annual Montgomery County Housing Fair and Consumer Protection Day.
- Municipal infraction citations were issued to several landlords for violating the requirements of the Rent Stabilization ordinance. The court imposed a total of \$6,365, along with an abatement of the violations. An additional \$1,000 is pending and will likely be paid by the landlord prior to the sale of the property.
- Departmental staff completed an inventory of businesses along New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard in the State-designated economic revitalization area/enterprise zone. An outreach program was initiated to provide information on government incentives for businesses located within the enterprise zone.
- Code enforcement continued its monitoring of the inspections conducted by Montgomery County, noting that a substantial number of single-family homeowners have discontinued their rental licenses. During the quarter, 38 single-family rentals were discontinued. An 11-unit rooming house was converted to an owner-occupied group home.
- Construction of the Carroll Avenue streetscape project got underway. A majority of the sidewalk work was completed.
- Construction on Laurel Avenue continued. Brickwork, bollard installation, and tree box construction were completed.

Library

- Children's book author Katherine Patterson gave the Library \$1,000 in memory of Gene Namovicz. The donation was earmarked for children's services.
- This year's golf tournament and auction in memory of former resident Mike Morrissey was held on October 3rd. The event raised nearly \$4,000 for the Library.
- The newly reconstituted organizing committee for the Takoma Park Film Festival received 60 submissions for this year's festival, which will be held on November 18th – 20th. Library staff and the Friends of the Library are providing assistance to the organizing committee.
- On July 30th, enthusiastic audiences of children and adults attended a double program of stories, followed by a workshop. Diane Maclin and Arianna Ross told stories from a rich variety of cultures around the world. Afterwards, they conducted a workshop designed to equip parents and educators with skills to make storytelling more meaningful and rewarding to audiences. The program, part of the Library's summer reading celebration, was funded by a grant from the Washington Redskins through the Friends of the Takoma Park, Maryland Library. It was featured on the front page of the *Gazette* on August 3rd.
- On September 29th, Dr. Lori Potts-Dupre began a four-part speakers' series for college bound students and their parents. The series, which is supported by the Friends of the Library, covers financial aid, SAT and ACT preparation, college selection, and resources for students with learning disabilities.

Police

- The Criminal Investigations Division conducted a detail related to robberies in the V2 beat (the residential neighborhood near the Metro in Ward 1).
- The department continued to place a high priority on traffic enforcement and pedestrian safety. During the quarter, major roadways were monitored for speed, stop sign, and official sign violations. These roadways included Maple Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, University Boulevard, Highway 410, Flower Avenue, Ethan Allen Avenue, and Piney Branch Road. Attention was also paid to secondary streets and locations throughout the City, including Erskine, Jackson, Wildwood, Walnut, Greenwood, Kirklynn, Lockney, Merwood, Houston, Roanoke, Merrimac, Sycamore, Maplewood, Linden, and Ritchie.
- The third wave of the Smooth Operator program was conducted during the week of July 18th. The program, which is carried out on an overtime basis and paid for through a state grant, focused on aggressive driving through enforcement of excessive speed, running stop signs, and running red lights.
- Activities of the Community Oriented Policing (COP) Team included the following:
 - ❑ Sergeant Gilbert worked with youth at the Blair High School football camp; he will continue to work with the team as an assistant coach throughout the season.
 - ❑ The team, in conjunction with Chief Creamer and Victim/Witness Service Coordinator Diana Dean, fingerprinted more than 100 children during the Takoma Park Folk Festival. Another fingerprinting session for children was held on September 24th at our Lady of Sorrows Church.

- ❑ On September 13th, Sergeant Gilbert and Officer Smith took residents of Victory Tower to the MVA to obtain identification cards.
- ❑ The team provided traffic direction during the back-to-school night on September 15th at Takoma Middle School.
- A Town Hall meeting on gang activities was held on September 14th. The meeting, organized by Chief Creamer at the request of Councilmember Doug Barry, brought together a multi-jurisdictional panel of law enforcement officials and prosecutors.
- Using overtime funding provided through the Long Branch Neighborhood Weed and Seed program, the first wave of directed patrol in the W4 and W5 beats was completed. Focused patrol occurred in the area of Flower Avenue, Houston Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Lee Avenue. Between September 16th and September 27th, officers working between 4:00 p.m. and midnight logged 88 hours of directed patrol. The wave resulted in issuance of 62 warnings, 34 citations, 13 field stops, three arrests, and 25 hours of foot patrol.

Public Works

- Erskine Avenue and 13th Avenue were repaved. In preparation for repaving, concrete curb and gutter replacement occurred on Takoma Avenue, Lockney Avenue, Kennewick Avenue, Cole Avenue, and Glenside Drive.
- City staff completed 24 permanent pavement patches on 15 streets. Having this work performed by City staff is more cost-effective than having the work performed by a contractor.
- The City supervised renovation of 7133 Carroll Avenue. This work, which is being done as part of the new fire station construction project, got underway in August and should be completed by early 2006. In a related matter, departmental staff is reviewing the storm water, tree removal, and tree protection permit applications submitted by Montgomery County in conjunction with the fire station construction. The County plans to submit for building permits in November.
- Departmental staff provided support for the Folk Festival and the Street Festival.
- Parking lot lighting was installed at Heffner Park as part of the second phase of park improvements. Community Parks and Playgrounds provided the City a second grant of \$40,000 to complete the lighting and resurfacing of the parking lot.

Recreation

- Director of Recreation Debra Haiduven met with representatives of local agencies to discuss potential partnerships in the new Community Center. The goal is to find service providers who can address the needs of our citizens through programs or the allocation of resources. Ron Wylie from Adventist Health discussed offering a senior lecture series focusing on health and socialization beginning in January 2006. Sharlene Hirsch from the Jewish Council for the Aging made a proposal whereby the City could host an "Active for Life" program for local seniors. Officials from Montgomery College met with several staff members to discuss cooperative ventures in the Center.
- Departmental staff continued to work on the development of policies for the operation and use of the Community Center. Staff compiled information about the policies and procedures of other jurisdictions relative to the operation of their facilities. This data was used to shape staff's recommendations to the City Council for the City's Community Center.

- The department submitted a grant application to the Takoma Foundation for furnishings and equipment for the new Community Center. The Foundation approved the City's application. Since a specific delivery date could not be confirmed until the City obtained a Certificate of Occupancy for the building, staff placed tentative orders for the furnishings and equipment.
- Due to scheduling issues with Piney Branch Elementary School (PBES), many adjustments had to be made to this year's summer camps; staff will pursue better channels of communication between the schools and the City to avoid similar problems next year. In spite of these challenges, the camps were successful. Over 322 camp slots were filled at this site, and a total of 100 teens participated in the Extreme Horizons trip camp and weeklong overnight camp. Enrollment at the Takoma Park Recreation Center was surprisingly low, which resulted in staff transporting a handful of children in the morning from the Center to PBES.
- The second annual Touch a Truck event, which was held on September 17th, attracted large numbers of young children and their parents. Staff used the opportunity to promote upcoming tot programs in the new Community Center and at Heffner. The Public Works and Recreation Departments worked together to make this program a success.